

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH  
LANDSCAPE PAINTING**

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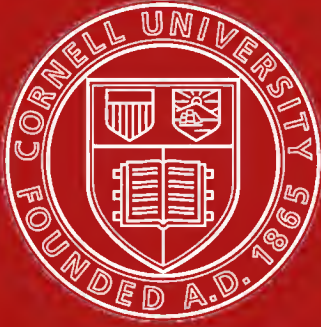
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The development of British landscape painting



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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH LAND- SCAPE PAINTING IN WATER-COLOURS

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TAYLOR ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

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### PREFATORY NOTE

*The Editor desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to the artists and owners who have kindly lent their drawings for reproduction in this volume*



# THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN WATER-COLOURS. BY ALEXANDER J. FINBERG

(1) INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE IDEA OF DEVELOPMENT AS APPLIED TO ART

THE idea of development has played, for considerably more than half a century, and still plays, a large part in all discussions about art. And it is obvious that it is a very useful and at the same time a very dangerous idea ; useful, because with its aid you can prove anything you have a mind to, and dangerous, because it conceals all sorts of latent suggestions, vague presuppositions, and lurking misconceptions, and thus misleads and beguiles the unwary. The most insidious and dangerous of these suggestions is its connexion with the ideas of progress or advance. The dictionaries, indeed, give "progress" as one of the synonyms of "development," and amongst the synonyms of "progress" I find "advance," "attainment," "growth," "improvement," and "proficiency." So that as soon as we begin to connect the idea of development with the history of art we find ourselves committed, before we quite realize what we are doing, to the view that the latest productions of art are necessarily the best. If art develops, it necessarily grows, improves, and advances, and the history of art becomes a record of the steps by which primitive work has passed into the fully developed art of the present ; the latest productions being evidently the most valuable, because they sum up in their triumphant complexity all the tentative variations and advances of which time and experience have approved.

Stated thus baldly the idea as applied to art seems perhaps too obviously at variance with our tastes, experience, and instinctive standards of artistic values to be worth a moment's consideration. Yet we are all too well aware that this is the line of argument by which every freak, every eccentric, insane or immoral manifestation of artistic perversity and incompetence which has appeared in Europe within the last thirty or forty years has been commended and justified. Certainly in England every writer on art who calls himself "advanced" is an evolutionist of this crude and uncritical type. At one time it was Cézanne and Van Gogh who were supposed to have summed up in their triumphant complexity the less developed efforts of Titian, Rembrandt, Watteau, and Turner, and at the present moment Cézanne and Van Gogh are being superseded by Mr. Roger Fry and his young lions of "The New Movement."

The worst of it is that the idea of development, of evolution, is a perfectly sound and useful one in certain spheres of activity. In science, for instance, the idea works and is helpful. The successive modifications and

improvements by which the latest type of steam-engine has been evolved from Stevenson's "Puffing Billy," or the latest type of air-ship from the Montgolfier balloon, form a series of steps which are related and connected with each other, and they are so intimately connected that the latest step sums up and supersedes all the others. No one would travel with Stevenson's engine who could employ a British or American engine of the latest type. There we have a definite system of development—of growth, improvement, and increased proficiency. And we find the same thing if we look at science as a whole, as a body of knowledge of a special kind. Its problems are tied together, subordinated and co-ordinated, unified in one vast system, so that we can represent its history as a single line of progress or retreat.

But art is not like science. Donatello's sculpture is not a growth from the sculpture of Pheidias or Praxiteles in the same way that the London and North-Western engine is a growth from Stevenson's model; nor was Raphael's work developed from Giotto's in the same way. Works of art are separate and independent things. That is why Donatello has not superseded Pheidias, nor Raphael Giotto; and that is why the world cherishes the earliest works of art quite as much as the later ones.

Yet we are bound to admit that we can find traces of an evolutionary process even in the history of art, if we look diligently for them. I remember to have seen a book by a well-known Italian critic in which the representations of the Madonna are exhibited from this point of view (A. Venturi, "La Madonna," Milan, 1899). In it the pictures of the Madonna are treated as an organism which gradually develops, attains perfection, gets old, and dies. There is something to be said for this point of view. When you have a number of artists successively treating the same subject you naturally find that alterations and fresh ideas are imported into their work. These additions and modifications can quite fairly be regarded as developments of the subject-matter and its treatment. But such developments are always partial and one-sided, and they are accompanied with losses of another kind. If Raphael's Madonnas are more correctly drawn and modelled than those of Giotto, these gains are balanced by a corresponding loss in the spiritual qualities of sincerity and earnestness of religious conviction. It depends, therefore, on what narrow and strictly defined point of view we adopt whether we find development or decay in any particular series of artistic productions. From one point of view the history of art from Giotto to Raphael can be regarded as a process of growth and advance, from another, the same series can be taken, as Ruskin actually took it, as an exhibition of the processes of death and decay. The enlightened lover and student of art will look at the matter from both, and other, points of view, but he will realize that the theory of development does not help him in any way to find a standard of value for works of art.

Art must be judged by its own standards, and those standards tell us

PLATE I.



*(In the possession of C. Morland Aquare, Esq.)*

"LAKE ALBANO AND CASTEL GANDOLFO." BY J. R. COZENS.



that each individual masterpiece is perfect in its own marvellous way, whether it was produced like the *Cheik el Beled* or *The Scribe*, some five or six thousand years ago, or like the paintings of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Turner within comparatively recent times.

(2) THE BEARING OF THESE REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF BRITISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTING

THE direct bearing of these remarks on our immediate subject-matter will, I hope, be evident to all who are familiar with the literature of the history of British water-colour painting.

The first attempt to form an historical series of British water-colours for the public use was begun in 1857, by Samuel Redgrave for the Science and Art Department of what was then the Board of Education. Thanks to Redgrave's knowledge and enthusiasm a worthy collection of examples of the works of the founders of the school was soon got together, and this nucleus was rapidly enlarged by purchases, gifts, and bequests. These drawings were housed and exhibited in what was then called the South Kensington Museum, and in 1877 Redgrave published an admirable "Descriptive Catalogue" of the collection. As an introduction to this catalogue he wrote a valuable account of the origin and historical development of the art. Both the official character of this publication as well as its intrinsic merits, literary and historical—for Redgrave and his brother Richard, who had assisted him in the work, were two of the best informed historians of English art in the last century—combined to make it at the time and for many years afterwards the standard and most authoritative book on this subject. But its historical part has one serious defect, due perhaps to some extent to the unfortunate association of science with art in the same museum. Redgrave's conception of artistic development was evidently borrowed ready-made from the ideas of his scientific colleagues. He treats the chronological arrangement of the drawings in exactly the same way as the men of science treat the successive alterations and improvements which Stevenson's first model steam-engine underwent; and as he found the earlier drawings approached very nearly to monochrome, while the later ones were highly coloured and fuller in the statement and realization of detail, he took it for granted that these changes marked the true line of progress and development in the art. The early "stained" drawings of Scott and Rooker were treated as the primitive and undeveloped models from which the later and more elaborate works of Turner, Copley Fielding, Sidney Cooper, John F. Lewis, Louis Haghe, and Carl Werner were developed. Every fresh complication of technique and elaboration of effect were hailed enthusiastically as signs of "progress," and brilliance of colour, richness of effect, and fullness of realization were treated as the marks of "the full perfection" of which the art was capable. In this way water-colour "drawing" became

“elevated” into the “perfected” art of *painting* in water-colours, and the beneficent cosmic process triumphantly produced paintings in water-colour which could actually “hold their own” in force and brilliancy of effect with oil paintings.

As a temporary measure Redgrave’s excursus into evolutionary theory must have been extraordinarily successful. No more specious doctrine could well have been invented to flatter and gratify all parties concerned at the moment ; the presidents and leading members of the two water-colour societies must have found peace and comfort in Redgrave’s theory, and the general public must have felt that “enlightenment and progress” even in artistic matters were being duly fostered by an efficient “Committee Council on Education.” But the theory has serious defects. It sets up a false standard of artistic value, it withdraws attention from the higher beauties of art to focus it upon merely materialistic and technical questions, and, what is perhaps still more serious, it prejudices the efforts of subsequent artists, and closes the door to future changes and developments.

The importance of these latter considerations will be seen as soon as we turn our attention to the art of the present day and that of the period which has intervened between it and the date of the publication of Redgrave’s catalogue. Consider for one moment the water-colours of Whistler, Clausen, Wilson Steer, D. Y. Cameron, Anning Bell, Charles Sims, A. W. Rich, Charles Gere, and Romilly Fedden, and judge them in terms of Redgrave’s formula ! If we do we are bound to confess that they one and all stand condemned. If Redgrave’s idea of the line of progress and advance is correct we are bound to believe that the works of these fine artists represent, not progress and advance, but decay and loss. Indeed, the two chief movements in art in the last quarter of the last century, the discovery of atmosphere as the predominant factor in pictorial representation—what may be called for the sake of brevity the whole Impressionistic movement, and the later deliberate search for simplicity of statement, either in the interests of decorative effect or emotional expression, were seriously thwarted and hindered by the demands for “exhibition finish,” so-called conscientious workmanship, and a standard of professional technique—“real painting, as such,” as Ruskin called it—set up and maintained by the erroneous theories of artistic progress of which Redgrave was only one of the exponents.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that any attempt to deal fairly and generously with the art of more recent times shall consciously and deliberately dissociate itself from such theories.

### (3) THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUBJECT-MATTER AND TECHNIQUE

AFTER what has been written above it is to be hoped that the dangers attending the use of the word “development” have been exorcised. We intend to use the word merely as a synonym for chronological sequence,

and we have been careful to point out that the historical order in which artists appear does not coincide or run parallel with any growth, advance, progress, or improvement in the artistic value of their work. Shorn thus of its stolen finery of theoretical prejudice and philosophical imposture the naked course of chronological sequence presents few attractions to the enthusiastic lover of the beautiful. It has, however, its uses. These are mainly mnemonical, for it supplies the thread on which we string together in our memory the things strewn along the schedule of the years without apparent rhyme or reason. The dates will not help us to pick out the good from the bad, but they help us to place among their proper surroundings the good things which our sympathies and instincts find for us.

With this grudging apostrophe to the historical maid-of-all-work we will proceed with our survey of the brief tale of years during which our national school of water-colour painting has been in existence. The business of this chapter is to outline the development of form and content, of subject-matter and technique.

For the beginnings of British landscape painting we must look to the drawings and engravings connected with the study of topography, using this word in the ordinary sense of place-drawing, or the description of a particular building or spot. Generally speaking the designs of the earlier draughtsmen are now known only through the engravings which were made from them. Roget, in his "History of the Old Water-Colour Society" (chapters i and iii, Book I) gives a full and interesting account of these engravings.<sup>17</sup> The earliest drawings we need refer to are those of Samuel Scott (1710-1772) and his pupil, William Marlow (1740-1813), Paul Sandby (1725-1809), William Pars (1742-1782), Michael Angelo Rooker (1743-1801), and Thomas Hearne (1744-1817).

<sup>18</sup> Working alongside these artists was another group of men who produced "landscapes" which relied for their interest rather upon the sentiments evoked by their subject-matter and treatment than upon the purely topographical character of their work. These painters of poetical or sentimental landscape may be said to have begun with George Lambert (1710?-1765), Richard Wilson (1713-1782), and Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788). Of these only the latter used water-colour as an independent medium. His *Landscape with Waggon on a Road through a Wood* (British Museum) reminds one somewhat of the landscape studies of Rubens and Van Dyck, at least as regards the colour-effect and the feeling for atmosphere.<sup>19</sup> Through Gainsborough the influence of Rubens and that of the Flemish conception of landscape painting was brought to bear on British art, while Lambert and Richard Wilson familiarized the younger artists and their patrons with the style and aims of Poussin and Claude. The same influences are discernible in the works of Alexander Cozens (d. 1786) and his son, John Robert Cozens (1752-1799), both of whom worked almost entirely in water-colour.



The works of these painters of poetical landscape taught the public to demand something more emotional in feeling and more dignified and impressive in treatment than the prosaic transcripts and conventionally composed drawings of the topographers. Their example also taught the rising generation of artists, amongst whom we find Edward Dayes (1763-1804), John Glover (1767-1849), Joshua Cristall (1767?-1847), F. L. T. Francia (1772-1839), Thomas Girtin (1775-1802), J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851), John Constable (1776-1837), and John Sell Cotman (1782-1842), how to meet those demands.

In Turner's *Warkworth Castle* (V. and A. Museum), exhibited in 1799, and Girtin's *Bridgnorth* (British Museum), painted in 1802, we find these two streams of influence uniting. These drawings are at the same time both topographical and poetical; each represents a particular place with a good deal of accuracy, but in such a way that the drawing might just as correctly be called a poetical landscape as a topographical representation.

This combination of fact with emotion, of representation with poetry, has remained during the whole of the nineteenth century and down to the present day the dominant characteristic of British landscape painting. Sometimes the topographical factor was subdued or almost submerged, as in the water-colours of George Barret, junr. (1767-1842) and Francis Oliver Finch (1802-1862), but it is generally predominant, though always in combination with emotional or poetical expression, in the works of William Havell (1782-1857), David Cox (1783-1859), Peter De Wint (1784-1849), Copley Fielding (1787-1855), G. F. Robson (1788-1833), Samuel Prout (1783-1852), William Hunt (1790-1864), Clarkson Stanfield (1793-1867), David Roberts (1796-1864), J. D. Harding (1797 or 8-1863), R. P. Bonington (1802-1828), T. Shotter Boys (1803-1874), J. Scarlett Davis (1804?-1844), J. F. Lewis (1805-1876), W. J. Müller (1812-1845), William Callow (1812-1908), Birket Foster (1825-1899), A. W. Hunt (1830-1896), E. M. Wimperis (1835-1900), Tom Collier (1840-1891), and J. Buxton Knight (1842-1908).

The course of development of the subject-matter of British landscape painting in water-colour we may, therefore, say has been somewhat as follows: it started with the object of recording as clearly and accurately as was possible the appearance of buildings and places, and it did this, not for purely artistic reasons, but in the interests of antiquarian, archaeological, historical, or geographical information; by the side of this place-recording activity there sprang up a series of painters who aimed at the production of landscapes as the means of artistic and emotional expression; we then find these two groups acting on each other, the poetical school teaching the topographers style, design, "atmosphere," and emotion, and the topographers directing the attention of the poetical painters to the observation and study of nature and the expression of



PLATE II.



*(In the possession of Thomas Girtin, Esq.)*

“THE VALLEY OF THE AIRE.” BY THOMAS GIRTIN.



their own personal emotions; and the outcome of this process is the present school of British landscape painters in water-colours, which attempts, both in its highest and in its lowest efforts, to do full justice to the progressive demands which the educated public has thus learned to make on the artist.)

We turn now to the development of technique. The earliest topographers worked on white paper, on which, after the subject had been outlined in pencil—such outlines being sometimes enforced with pen and ink, the general system of light and shade was washed in monochrome; the local colours were then washed over this preparation. The method, so far as the colours were concerned, was somewhat similar to that of tinting or colouring an engraving. In drawings executed in this manner by Sandby, Rooker, and Hearne the brilliance of the colours is somewhat subdued by the grey underpainting. But this is probably due to the fact that the artists worked only with their washes of transparent colour, relying upon the white paper asserting itself through these washes. The luminous effects produced in this way—in drawings like Sandby's *Windsor: East View from Crown Corner* (British Museum) and Rooker's *St. Botolph's* (V. and A. Museum)—have been so much admired that many living artists have deliberately gone back to this simple way of working.

The effect of the grey underpainting on the finished work is, however, largely dependent on the artist's wishes. If he chooses to sacrifice the luminosity of the white paper he can paint over his preliminary washes with colour so heavily charged that it will practically annihilate them. This is what Girtin generally did in his later works, though it must be added that he also changed the colour of his preparatory washes from grey to brown. I am inclined to think, therefore, that Redgrave has exaggerated the importance of the use or disuse of these preliminary washes.

The earlier poetical painters, like Lambert, and Sandby in his larger compositions painted for exhibition purposes, worked in body-colour, i.e., opaque white was mixed with all the colours. In this way some approximation to the force of oil painting was obtained. Another way of getting a similar result was to work with the paper wet. A good example of this method is Turner's *Warkworth Castle*. In this picture Turner tries to do in water-colour what Richard Wilson did in oils. He gets his effects of deep rich tone and force of colour by working with a heavily charged brush, sponging, and wiping out the lights with a dry brush or handkerchief or scraping them with a knife.

The methods of *Warkworth Castle* were practically those used by the younger Barret, Varley, Copley Fielding, Cox, and De Wint, but after about 1830 we find opaque white coming into general use, at first merely to give increased force to the high lights, but later it was mixed freely with all the transparent colours, and toned or tinted paper was

used to give greater brilliance to the body-colour. John F. Lewis worked in this way, but the hardness and glitter to which it so easily conduced led to its abandonment by the later artists who set themselves to render the delicate gradations of the atmosphere. Yet one must admit that in the hands of a master technician like Turner all the unpleasant qualities so often apparent in body-colour work can be avoided, as the *Rivers of France* drawings prove. At the present time some artists, who aim especially at force and brilliance of colour, prefer to work in tempera, but it is doubtful whether this medium can rightly be regarded as a form of water-colour painting.

On the whole we may say that the technique of water-colour has changed very little during the last two centuries. The chief change has perhaps been connected with the introduction, about 1830, of moist colours put up in metal tubes, a great convenience to artists in search of bold effects without the expenditure of much time or trouble. But even this has proved a doubtful advantage, and many artists have now gone back to the use of hard cakes of colour, similar to those with which the earlier men obtained their delicate and luminous results.

#### (4) SOME FAMOUS WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS OF THE PAST

IN the previous section we have deliberately refrained from saying anything about the purely artistic qualities of the works we have referred to. This is because we have been engaged in a strictly historical survey, and to the eye of history there is no difference between the works of a great artist and those of a bungler. Both are equally patent and indubitable facts. It is the business of criticism to appraise the artistic beauty of works of art. And if in our historical survey we have kept our attention fixed generally on the works of the greater men, this is more the result of accident than design. Art criticism has already sifted much of the good from the bad in the work of the past, and it is more convenient, in a general survey of this kind, to deal with what is best known and valued. But because history can thus take advantage of what art criticism has done, that is no reason why we should confuse the two processes, and it cannot be repeated too often that historical importance or interest has nothing whatever to do with artistic value. The aim of this section is to make good the defects of historical study, so far, at least, as the limited space at our disposal will permit. With this object in view we have selected a baker's dozen of the more famous artists of the past, and we will endeavour to indicate some of the qualities which make their works a joy and delight to those who have the privilege of knowing them. In each case we will supply, in tabloid form, a certain amount of biographical information, as knowledge of the time and place in which an artist works and the conditions under which he produces helps us to understand what he has done; we shall also attempt to point out the chief public galleries where each artist's works





*(In the possession of Messrs. J. Palmer & Sons.)*

"KIRKHAM ABBEY." BY JOHN SELL GOTMAN, R.W.S.



can be seen (when happier times bring about the reopening of our museums and art galleries), and the sources from which those who care for it can obtain fuller information and more authoritative criticism than we ourselves can supply. Such information as we can give will be as correct as we can make it, but it will make no claim whatever to be exhaustive.

## PAUL SANDBY

[Born at Nottingham, 1725 ; entered military drawing office of the Tower of London, 1746; draughtsman to a survey of the Northern and Western Highlands, 1748-1751, during which time he published some etchings of Scottish views ; worked at Windsor for some years from 1752, where his brother, Thomas, was Deputy Ranger; chief drawing-master, Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, 1768-1797 ; elected Director of the Society of Artists, October 18, 1766 ; original member of Royal Academy, 1768 ; introduced the aquatint method of engraving into England ; published first set of twelve aquatints of views in South Wales, 1774, a second set of views in North Wales, 1776, and a third set in 1777 ; died 1809.

EXHIBITED : Society of Artists, 1760-'68 ; Royal Academy, 1769-'77, '79-'82, '86-'88, '90-'95, '97-1802, '06-'09 ; Free Society, 1782, '83.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES : National Gallery ; V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours) ; British Museum ; National Gallery of Ireland ; Greenwich Hospital ; Diploma Gallery, R.A. ; Manchester Whitworth Institute ; Norwich, Nottingham, Glasgow, etc., Art Galleries.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES : "Thomas and Paul Sandby," by William Sandby, 1892 ; "D. N. B." ; Roget's "History of the Old Water-Colour Society," 1891. REPRODUCTIONS OF WORKS : "The Earlier English Water-Colour Painters," by Cosmo Monkhouse ; "The English Water-Colour Painters," by A. J. Finberg ; "Early English Water-Colour," by C. E. Hughes ; "Water-Colour," by the Hon. Neville Lytton ; "Water-Colour Painting," by A. W. Rich ; "The Royal Academy" (THE STUDIO Summer Number, 1904) ; THE STUDIO, Jan. 1918.]

Sandby was one of the most prolific of the earlier topographical artists. His numberless drawings and the engravings he made from them did more than any one man had done before to familiarize Englishmen with the beauties of their native land. He was an indefatigable traveller, and he was the first artist to discover the artistic beauties of Wales.

He worked both in transparent colour and in gouache. His drawings in the latter medium, of which there are several in the V. and A. Museum, are distinctly inferior to his works in pure colour. They are scenic and conventional in design, feeble and pretentious in execution. His drawings in transparent colour, however, are delightfully fresh and vigorous; luminous in effect, and filled with proofs of keen and genial observation. They seem full of air and light, vivid human interest, and in their treatment of architecture and of all natural features they are at once careful, accurate and lucid without ever showing signs of labour or fatigue. In the abundance of his work and its variety Sandby approached nearer to

Turner than any other artist. But he had not Turner's subtlety of eye and hand, nor his exquisite sense of artistic form. His landscapes are well composed, but on conventional lines, and the whole material is never welded together into an original and impeccable design, as with Turner, Cozens, and Cotman.

Sandby's Welsh aquatints with their many daring effects of light form the real forerunners of Turner's "Liber Studiorum." They display better than any single drawing the width and range of the artist's powers.

As an engraver and water-colour painter Paul Sandby is a genial and inspiring personality. He transformed topographical draughtsmanship into something new and living, instinct with life and emotion. "And if we may not call him a great artist, we may at least say that he was a topographical draughtsman of genius."

## ALEXANDER COZENS

[Born in Russia, date unknown; son of Peter the Great and an Englishwoman; sent by his father to study painting in Italy; said to have come to England in 1746; drawing-master at Eton School; 1763-1768; married a sister of Robert Edge Pine; elected Fellow of the Society of Artists, 1765; died in Duke Street, Piccadilly, April 23, 1786.

EXHIBITED: Society of Artists, 1760, '63, '65-'71; Free Society, 1761, '62; Royal Academy, 1772, '73, '75, '77-'79, '81.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours); British Museum; Manchester Whitworth Institute.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: Leslie's "Handbook for Young Painters"; Redgrave's "Dictionary"; "Reminiscences of Henry Angelo," vol. i, 212-216; "D. N. B."

REPRODUCTIONS: THE STUDIO, Feb. 1917; Finberg's "English Water-Colour Painters."]

The date when Alexander Cozens came to England is given above as 1746. This is what we find in all the reference books, and it is founded on a memorandum pasted in a book of drawings made by the artist in Italy which is now in the British Museum. This memorandum states that "Alexander Cozens, in London, author of these drawings, lost them, and many more, in Germany, by their dropping from his saddle, when he was riding on his way from Rome to England, in the year 1746. John Cozens, his son, being at Florence in the year 1776, purchased them. When he returned to London in the year 1779 he delivered the drawings to his father." Now either the date in this note is wrong or, what seems a more probable explanation, Alexander Cozens's journey to England in 1746 was not the occasion of his first visit to this country, for there is an engraved *View of the Royal College of Eton*, after a drawing made by Cozens, which was published in 1742. It was engraved by John Pine, whose daughter afterwards became Alexander Cozens's wife. The existence of this engraving, which has been noticed by none



of the writers on Cozens's life, seems to point to the probability that the artist came to England at least four years earlier than has been supposed. It also shows how little we know about Cozens's early life, and it suggests a certain amount of scepticism about the constantly repeated statements on this subject which rest, apparently, either on dubious authority or on authority which has not or cannot be verified.

Alexander Cozens's work attracted little attention in modern times until the late Mr. Herbert Horne perceived its beauties. Public attention was first drawn to it by the "Historical Collection of British Water-Colours" organized by the Walpole Society in the Loan Exhibition held at the Grafton Galleries at the end of 1911, which included five beautiful drawings by Cozens. This was followed, in 1916, by an exhibition of Mr. Horne's collection of drawings with special reference to the works of Alexander Cozens, held by the Burlington Fine Arts Club. To the catalogue of this exhibition Mr. Laurence Binyon contributed a valuable article on "Alexander Cozens and his Influence on English Painting." In this article Mr. Binyon does justice to Cozen's originality of design and to the emotional power of his drawings. "In his freest vein he uses his brush with a loose impetuosity which reminds one curiously of Chinese monochrome sketches—the kind of work beloved by those Chinese artists who valued spontaneous freshness and personal expressiveness above all else in landscape." "It was indeed," Mr. Binyon adds, "the naked elements" (of landscape structure) "rather than the superficial aspects of a scene which appealed to his imagination; and in nature it was the solitary and the spacious rather than the agreeably picturesque which evoked his deepest feelings."

Alexander Cozens used colour sparingly and seldom. His best drawings are either in bistre or in indian ink, and he was fond of working on stained, or perhaps oiled, paper (which was formerly used for tracing). Such paper has doubtless acquired a darker tone with age, and it adds to the "sombreness" of which contemporaries complained in his drawings.

## JOHN ROBERT COZENS

[Son of Alexander Cozens, born 1752; made sketching tour in Switzerland and Italy, with R. Payne Knight, 1776–1779; again visited Switzerland and Italy, this time in company with William Beckford, 1782; became insane, 1794; died, it is said, 1799.]

EXHIBITED: Society of Artists, 1767–'71; Royal Academy, 1776.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours); British Museum; National Gallery of Ireland; Manchester Whitworth Institute; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Oldham Art Gallery (Charles E. Lees' Collection); Manchester Art Gallery (James Blair Bequest).

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: Edwards's "Anecdotes"; Leslie's "Handbook"; Redgrave's "Century" and "Dictionary"; "D. N. B."

REPRODUCTIONS: Cosmo Monkhouse's, Finberg's, Hughes's and Rich's works, already cited; THE STUDIO, Feb. 1917.]

It is really surprising that we know so little about this artist. During his lifetime his works were much sought after, and he must have been personally known to a number of distinguished people ; both Payne Knight and the eccentric millionaire, William Beckford, the author of "Vathek," and owner and rebuilder of Fonthill Abbey, with whom he travelled in Italy and Switzerland, and who both possessed a large number of his drawings, were voluminous writers, yet neither has deigned to tell us anything of interest about the character, personality, or even outward appearance of this very great artist. Both Beckford and Knight wrote accounts of their travels, but one searches them in vain for a single word that would prove that these highly intelligent men had the shadow of a notion that the quiet and unobtrusive young "draughtsman" in their employ was one of the greatest artists their country had produced.

We do not know for certain where or when John Cozens was born nor when he died. Roget says he "appears to have been born abroad when his parent was giving lessons in Bath," but he gives no authority for the statement, and so far as I know it has not been verified. The best evidence for the date of his birth seems to be Leslie's statement that he once saw a small pen-drawing on which was written, "Done by J. Cozens, 1761, when nine years of age." If the date is correct Cozens was only fifteen when he began to exhibit at the Society of Artists. Constable stated that Cozens died in 1796, but most of the authorities give the date as 1799.

That the artist was modest and unobtrusive, like his drawings, we may feel sure. As Leslie wrote, "So modest and unobtrusive are the beauties of his drawings that you might pass them without notice, for the painter himself never says 'Look at this, or that,' he trusts implicitly to your own taste and feeling ; and his works are full of half-concealed beauties such as Nature herself shows but coyly, and these are often the most fleeting appearances of light. Not that his style is without emphasis, for then it would be insipid, which it never is, nor ever in the least commonplace."

Constable was one of the first to realize Cozens's true greatness. "Cozens," he said, "is all poetry," and on another occasion he rather shocked Leslie by asserting that Cozens was "the greatest genius that ever touched landscape." Yet this assertion contains nothing but the plain truth. Genius is the only word we can use to describe the intense concentration of mind and feeling which inspires Cozens's work. To the analytic eye his drawings are baffling and bewildering in the extreme ; it is impossible to find a trace of cleverness or conscious artifice in them. They make you feel that you are looking at the work of a somnambulist or of one who has painted in a trance. They are, I believe, the most incorporeal paintings which have been produced in the Western world, for the paint and the execution seem to count for so

little and the personal inspiration for so much. The painter's genius seems to speak to you direct, and to impress and overawe you without the help of any intermediary.

In this respect Cozens is quite different from Turner. Even when he trusted most implicitly to his genius Turner was always the great artist, the great colourist, the incomparable master of his technique whatever medium he was working in. Beyond the sheer beauty of his simple washes of transparent colour there is hardly a single technical or executive merit in Cozens's drawings that one can single out for praise or even for notice. Their haunting beauty and incomparable power are spiritual, not material. And as we can think of a spirit too pure and fine to inhabit a gross body like our own, so Cozens seems to be a genius too spiritual for form and colour and the palpable artifices of representation. Certainly no English artist relied more serenely and confidently on his genius, and subdued his art more absolutely to spiritual purposes. And this is what I think Constable meant when he called Cozens "the greatest genius that ever touched landscape"; he did not say that he was the greatest artist.

As one of our illustrations we reproduce the drawing *Lake Albano and Castel Ganaolfo* by Cozens (Plate I) in the collection of Mr. C. Morland Agnew.

## THOMAS GIRTIN

[Born in Southwark, 1775; apprenticed to Edward Dayes; first engravings after his drawings published in "Copper Plate Magazine," 1793; sketching tours, in the Midlands (Lichfield, etc.), 1794, Kent and Sussex 1795, Yorkshire and Scotland 1796, Devonshire 1797, Wales 1798, Yorkshire and Scotland 1799; "Girtin's Sketching Society" established, 1799; married, 1800; went to Paris, Nov. 1801, and returned to England, May 1802; his *Eidometropolis*, or Great Panorama of London, exhibited at Spring Gardens, August, 1802; died Nov. 9, 1802; engravings of his views of Paris published shortly after his death.

EXHIBITED: Royal Academy, 1794, '95, '97-1801.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours); British Museum; National Galleries of Scotland and Ireland; Manchester Whitworth Institute; Ashmolean and Fitzwilliam Museums; Oldham Art Gallery (Charles E. Lees' Collection).

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: Edwards's "Anecdotes"; Dayes' "Professional Sketches"; Redgrave's "Century" and "Dictionary"; B.F.A. Club's Catalogue, 1875; Roget's "History"; Binyon's "Life and Works," 1900; Walpole Society's Vols. II. and V.

REPRODUCTIONS: Binyon's "Life"; Monkhouse's, Finberg's, Hughes's, Lytton's, and Rich's works already cited; THE STUDIO (Centenary of Thomas Girtin Number), Nov. 1902; THE STUDIO, May 1916; Walpole Society's Vols. II. and V.]

Compared with John Cozens's work Girtin's appears often self-conscious and artificial. His drawings were admired by his contemporaries chiefly on account of their style; references to the "sword-play" of his pencil,

the boldness and swiftness of his washes, constantly recur in their eulogies of his work. Girtin was nearly always a stylist, and often a mannerist. But his style, at its best, is so thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of his work that it is difficult to separate the two. His love of the sweeping lines of the open moorland and his passion for height and space appeal irresistibly to our imagination, while the broad simplicity of his vision, his restrained and truthful colour, and his frank, bold, decisive handling seem the only adequate means by which his inspiration could find clear and authoritative expression.

We must remember, too, that Girtin died at the age of twenty-seven. The knowledge of his early and untimely death intensifies our admiration for all he did ; while the few supreme masterpieces of poetical landscape he has left us, like the *Plinlimmon*, show clearly what our national art lost by the tragedy of his early death.

Girtin seems to have mastered his art as Robert Louis Stevenson mastered his, by "playing the sedulous ape" to the men he admired. There are now in the British Museum copies he made after Antonio Canal, Piranesi, Hearne, Marlow, and Morland. Of these masters Canal seems to have impressed and taught him most. The spaciousness and breadth of effect of all his topographical work are clearly the outcome of his admiration for Canal's drawings and paintings. The calligraphic quality of his line work, what has been called the "sword-play" of his pencil, is also due to the same influence.

His earlier drawings, made about 1792 and 1793, were, however, modelled on the style of his master, Edward Dayes. The drawings he made after James Moore's sketches—of which several have been recently acquired by the Ashmolean Museum—might easily be mistaken for Dayes' work. They only differ in being more accomplished and workmanlike than those which his master made for the same patron, and in their deliberate avoidance of the dark "repoussoir" of which Dayes was so fond in his foregrounds—an avoidance which gives Girtin's drawings a greater unity and a more decorative effect than those of Dayes.

By about 1795 Girtin's real style began to assert itself, in drawings like those of Lichfield and Peterborough Cathedrals. From this time we find him pouring forth an abundance of superb topographical subjects instinct with style and ennobled with poetry and imagination—drawings like *Rievaulx Abbey* (1798), in the V. and A. Museum, *Carnarvon Castle*, and *The Old Ouse Bridge, York*, both in the possession of his great-grandson, Mr. Thomas Girtin. The noble studies for his *Panorama of London* (made probably in 1801), his *Lindisfarne* (?1797) and *Bridgnorth* (1802), are fortunately in the British Museum. The drawings he made on his return from Paris, during the last sad months of his fast-ebbing life—drawings like the *Porte St. Denis*—are amongst the most superb of his splendid productions.

I will close these brief and inadequate remarks by copying out two advertisements connected with Girtin's "Panorama" which I believe have not been printed or referred to by any one of the writers on his life and work. The first appeared in "The Times" on August 27, 1802. It runs as follows: "*Eidometropolis*, or Great Panoramic Picture of London, Westminster, and Environs, now exhibiting at the Great Room, Spring Gardens, Admission 1s. T. Girtin returns his most grateful thanks to a generous Public for the encouragement given to his Exhibition, and as it has been conceived to be merely a Picture framed, he further begs leave to request of the Public to notice that it is Panoramic, and from its magnitude, which contains 1944 square feet, gives every object the appearance of being the size of nature. The situation is so chosen as to shew to the greatest advantage the Thames, Somerset House, the Temple Gardens, all the Churches, Bridges, principal Buildings, &c., with the surrounding country to the remotest distance, interspersed with a variety of objects characteristic of the great Metropolis. His views of Paris, etched by himself, are in great forwardness, and to be seen with the Picture as above."

The second notice is as follows: "Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov., 1802. The Public are most respectfully informed that in consequence of the decease of Mr. Thomas Girtin, his Panorama of London exhibiting at Spring Gardens, will be shut till after his interment, when it will be re-opened for the benefit of his widow and children, under the management of his brother, Mr. John Girtin."

As an example of Girtin's work we reproduce *The Valley of the Aire with Kirkstall Abbey* (Plate II), from Mr. Thomas Girtin's collection.

## JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER

[Born in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, 23 April, 1775; worked in Life Academy, R.A. schools, 1792-1799; A.R.A., 1799, R.A. 1802; first tour on Continent, 1802; first part of "Liber Studiorum" issued, 1807; Professor of Perspective, R.A., 1807-1837; *Crossing the Brook* exhibited 1815; published "Southern Coast" series of engravings, 1814-1826, "Views in Sussex," 1816-1820, Hakewill's "Italy," 1818-1820, "Richmondshire," 1818-1823, "Provincial Antiquities of Scotland," 1819-1826, "England and Wales," 1827-1838, Rogers's "Italy," 1830, and "Poems," 1834, "Rivers of France," 1833-1835; exhibited *Rain, Steam, and Speed*, 1844; died Dec. 18, 1851.

EXHIBITED: Royal Academy, 1790-1804, '06-'20, '22, '23, '25-'47, '49, '50; British Institution, 1806, '8, '9, '14, '17, '35-'41, '46; Society of British Artists, 1833, '34; Institution for Enc. of F.A., Edinburgh, 1824; Cooke's Exhibitions, 1822-'24; Northern Academy of Arts, Newcastle, 1828; R. Birmingham S. of Artists, 1829, '30, '34, '35, '47; Liverpool Academy, 1831, '45; R. Manchester Institution, 1834, '35; Leeds Exhibition, 1839.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: National Gallery; V. and A. Museum; British Museum;

National Galleries of Ireland and Scotland; Ashmolean and Fitzwilliam Museums; Manchester Whitworth Institute; Bury Art Gallery, etc. etc.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: Peter Cunningham's Memoir, in John Burnet's "Turner and his Works," 1852; Alaric Watts's Memoir, in "Liber Fluviorum," 1853; Ruskin's "Modern Painters" and "Preterita"; Thornbury's "Life, etc.," 2 vols., 1862; Hamerton's "Life," 1879; Monkhouse's "Turner" (in "Great Artists Series"), 1882; C. F. Bell's "Exhibited Works of Turner," 1901; Sir Walter Armstrong's "Turner," 1902; Finberg's "Turner's Sketches and Drawings," 1910; etc. etc.

REPRODUCTIONS: Armstrong's "Turner"; Wedmore's "Turner and Ruskin"; "The Genius of Turner" (THE STUDIO Special Number, 1903); "Hidden Treasures at the National Gallery," 1905; "The Water-Colours of J. M. W. Turner" (THE STUDIO Spring Number, 1909); "Turner's Water-Colours at Farnley Hall" (THE STUDIO Special Number, 1912); Walpole Society's Vols. I., III., and VI.]

Turner's first exhibited water-colour, a *View of the Archbishop's Palace, Lambeth* (1790), is a poor imitation of Malton's least inspired topographical drawings. But he learned quickly. His *Inside of Tintern Abbey*, (1794) shows that before he was twenty he could draw and paint Gothic architecture better than any of the older topographical artists. His pre-eminence as a topographical draughtsman was firmly established by 1797, when he had painted such works as the *Lincoln Cathedral* (1795), *Llandaff Cathedral* (1796), *Westminster Abbey: St. Erasmus and Bishop Islip's Chapel* (1796), and *Wolverhampton* (1796).

From 1796 to 1804 Turner's style changed, chiefly under the influence of Richard Wilson's works, which he studied and copied diligently. These years saw the production of *Norham Castle* (1798), *Warkworth Castle* (1799), *Edinburgh, from Calton Hill* (1804), *The Great Fall of the Reichenbach* (done in 1804, but not exhibited till 1815), and the wonderful sketches in the Alps, *Blair's Hut*, *St. Gothard*, etc. (1802). In these energetic and powerful drawings he aims at getting depth and richness of tone and colour.

From 1804 to 1815 his energies were mainly directed to the production of his great sea-paintings, *The Shipwreck*, *Spithead*, etc., his lovely English landscapes, like *Abingdon*, *Windsor*, *The Frosty Morning*, and *Crossing the Brook*, and to making the designs in sepia for his "Liber Studiorum" and helping to engrave the plates. His water-colours during these years were not numerous, but they include *Scarborough Town and Castle* (1811), *The Stria* (about 1811), *Bolton Abbey from the South* (about 1812), all three at Farnley Hall, Mr. Morland Agnew's *Scarborough* (1810), *Scene on the River Tavey* (1813)—called by Mr. Ruskin *Pigs in Sunshine*, now in the Ruskin School at Oxford, and the *Malham Cove* (about 1815), now in the British Museum (Salting Bequest). In these drawings the capacities of water-colour are not forced so much into rivalry with the depth and power of oil painting as in those of the 1797-1804 period.

About 1812 or 1813 Turner began making the drawings which were engraved and published in Cooke's "Picturesque Views of the Southern Coast of England." Between 1815 and 1840 nearly all his work in





(In the possession of J. F. Schwaner, Esq.)

LAUNCESTON." BY J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.





water-colour was done to be engraved and published in similar undertakings. Turner's fame as a water-colour painter rested during his life-time chiefly on these drawings. Among them are many of the most beautiful works which have ever been produced in this medium. It is a pity, therefore, that they are not more adequately represented in our public galleries. This remark applies particularly to the drawings in transparent colour (like the *Launceston*, for instance, which is here reproduced, Plate IV), for those in body-colour—the "Rivers of France"—are nearly all either in the National Gallery, Ashmolean or Fitzwilliam Museums. But with the exception of *Hornby Castle* (V. & A. Museum) and most of the originals of the "Rivers" and "Ports of England" series (in the National Gallery), nearly all Turner's drawings made for the engravers are in private collections. We may perhaps allow ourselves to hope that some time in the future a separate gallery may be founded to do justice to British water-colours, in which such drawings would have to be properly represented.

After about 1840 Turner only worked in water-colours for his own pleasure and for that of a small circle of friends and admirers. The drawings made for his own pleasure are now nearly all in the National Gallery, where they have never been properly exhibited and where most of them cannot be seen by the public. These formed part of the Turners which the Trustees wanted to sell about a year ago. The drawings made for his friends and admirers include the *Constance*, *Lucerne*, and others of what have been called "The Epilogue" drawings. The public is able to catch glimpses of these occasionally at loan exhibitions and in auction rooms.

## JOHN SELL COTMAN

[Born at Norwich, May 16, 1782 ; went to London, 1798 ; gained prize for a drawing from the Society of Arts, 1800 ; returned to Norwich, 1806, and opened a school for drawing and design ; married, 1809 ; published a series of etchings, 1811, and became president of the Norwich Society of Artists ; published "Norman and Gothic Architecture," 1817, and "Architectural Antiquities of Normandy," 1822 ; Associate, Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1825 ; appointed Professor of Drawing at King's College, London, 1834, mainly through Turner's influence ; published his "Liber Studiorum," 1838 ; died July 24, 1842.

EXHIBITED : Royal Academy, 1800-'06 ; Associated Artists, 1810, '11 ; Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1825, '26, '28-'39 ; Society of British Artists, 1838 ; Norwich Society of Artists, 1807-'12, '15, '18, '20, '21, '23, '24 ; Norfolk and Suffolk Institution, 1828-'33.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES : National Gallery (an oil-painting) ; V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours) ; British Museum ; National Galleries of Scotland and Ireland ; Norwich Castle Museum ; Manchester Whitworth Institute, etc.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: Memoir in catalogue of Norwich Art Circle's exhibition of Cotman's works, July 1888; Laurence Binyon's "Crome and Cotman" (Portfolio Monograph), 1897, and "Cotman" in "Masters of English Landscape Painting" (THE STUDIO Summer Number, 1903).

REPRODUCTIONS: The three works cited above, and histories of British water-colour painting by Monkhouse, Finberg, etc., already cited.]

Cotman is the greatest of all the English water-colour painters born after Turner. He is the only one of them whose works can be put beside Turner's and judged on a footing of equality. When we compare Prout, Cox, De Wint, and even Bonington, with Turner we feel that they must be judged by some less exacting standard than that which we apply to Turner. This is not the case with Cotman. He had not the width and range, the abundance and all-conquering power of Turner, but within his own limits he is every whit as unapproachable.

Cotman was a member of Girtin's sketching club, and it is evident that Girtin's influence counted for much in his early work. From Girtin he learned to rely first and foremost upon full-bodied washes of colour placed exactly where they were wanted and left to dry just as they had flowed from the brush. Cotman's quite early works can easily be mistaken for poor drawings by Girtin or Francia. But in the drawings produced between 1803 and 1817, we find that he was not satisfied to paint, like the older men, in his studio upon an arbitrarily chosen formula of colouring. In a letter written to Dawson Turner on Nov. 30, 1805, he speaks of his summer sketching tour to York and Durham, and adds, "My chief study has been colouring from Nature, many of which are close copies of that full Dame." We see one of the results of these studies in what is perhaps his earliest masterpiece, the *Greta Bridge, Yorkshire* (1806), now in the British Museum. Its colour-scheme is as original as it is beautiful. The colouring is "natural," but it is Nature simplified to a system of harmoniously coloured spaces, in which light and shade and modelling are suggested rather than rendered.

The distinctive peculiarity of the workmanship of this, as indeed of all Cotman's drawings, is his reliance on the clear stain or rich blotting of the colour on paper preserved in all its freshness. The aims of representation are forced so much into the background that the artist seems to be mainly intent on the discovery and display of "the beauty native and congenial" to his materials. Mr. Binyon has drawn attention to the unconscious similarity of Cotman's methods and aims to those of the great schools of China and Japan of more than a thousand years ago.

Among the better-known of Cotman's drawings of this period we may mention the *Twickenham* (1807), *Trentham Church* (about 1809), *Draining Mill, Lincolnshire* (1810), and *Mousehold Heath* (1810); these are all reproduced in "Masters of English Landscape Painting" (THE STUDIO Summer Number, 1903), in which Mr. Binyon's illuminating essay was published. The beautiful drawing of *Kirkham Abbey, Yorkshire*, here reproduced (Plate III) by the courtesy of Messrs. J. Palser & Sons, is

an admirable example of Cotman's wonderful mastery in the use of decided washes of pure colour.

In 1817 Cotman made his first visit to Normandy, and after this date his colour becomes warmer, brighter, and more arbitrary. After about 1825 he indulges himself freely in the use of the strong primary colours, influenced probably by Turner's daring chromatic experiments.

## DAVID COX

[Born at Deritend, Birmingham, April 29, 1783; scene-painter in London, 1804; President of the "Associated Artists," 1810; member of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1813; drawing-master at Hereford, 1814-1826; published "Treatise on Landscape Painting," 1814, "Lessons in Landscape," 1816, "Young Artists' Companion," 1825, etc.; took lessons in oil painting from W. J. Müller, 1839; removed to neighbourhood of Birmingham, 1841, visiting Bettws-y-Coed yearly, 1844-1856; died June 7, 1859.

EXHIBITED: Royal Academy, 1805-'08; '27-'29, '43, '44; Associated Artists, 1809-'12; Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1813-'16, '18-'59; British Institution, 1814, '28, '43; Society of British Artists, 1841, '42.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: National Gallery; V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours); British Museum; National Galleries of Scotland and Ireland; Birmingham Art Gallery; Manchester Whitworth Institute; Glasgow, Manchester, Bury, Nottingham Art Galleries, etc.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: "Memoir of the Life of David Cox," by N. Neal Solly, 1875; Wedmore's "Studies in English Art," 2nd series.

REPRODUCTIONS: Solly's "Memoir"; Masters of English Landscape Painting (THE STUDIO Summer Number, 1903); "Drawings of David Cox" (Newnes's "Modern Master Draughtsmen" Series).]

It was not till about 1840, when he was fifty-seven years of age, that Cox managed to break free from the drudgery of teaching. This drudgery during the greater part of his life undoubtedly exercised a mischievous effect upon his art. Besides wasting so much of his time, and thus preventing him from attempting works which required sustained efforts, it forced him to develop a mechanical and facile dexterity of style. He got into the habit of "slithering" over the individual forms of objects, making his rocks and trees as rounded and shapeless as his clouds, in a way that irritates any one who has learned to use his eyes. There is some truth in John Brett's remark that "the daubs and blots of that famous sketcher (David Cox) were just definite enough to suggest . . . the most superficial aspects of things," though it may have been prompted by envy and exasperation.

Cox's reputation nowadays rests to a large extent on the drawings he made after 1840. *Hayfield with Figures*, *The Young Anglers* (1847), the *Welsh Funeral* (1850), *The Challenge* (1853), and *Snowden from Capel Curig* (1858) were among the fine things produced by the grand old artist during the last years of his life. Such moving and powerful works

are stamped with the sincerity, simplicity, and rugged dignity of David Cox's own character.

## SAMUEL PROUT

[Born at Plymouth, Sep. 17, 1783; settled in London, 1811; member of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1819; published "Rudiments of Landscape," etc., 1813, "A New Drawing Book for the Use of Beginners," 1821, and other drawing books; published lithographs of his Continental drawings, The Rhine, 1824, Flanders and Germany, 1833, France, Switzerland, and Italy, about 1839; died at Denmark Hill, Feb. 1852.

EXHIBITED: Royal Academy, 1803-'05, '08-'10, '12-'14, '17, '26, '27; British Institution, 1809-'11, '16-'18; Associated Artists, 1811, '12; Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1815-'51.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: National Gallery; V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours); British Museum; National Galleries of Scotland and Ireland; Fitzwilliam and Ashmolean Museums; Manchester Whitworth Institute; Birmingham, Manchester, Bury Art Galleries, etc.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: Ruskin, in "Art Journal," 1849, "Modern Painters," and "Notes on S. Prout and W. Hunt"; Roget's "History of the Old Water-Colour Society," 1891; "D. N. B.," "Sketches by Samuel Prout" (THE STUDIO Winter Number, 1914-'15), with text by E. G. Halton.

REPRODUCTIONS: Ruskin's "Notes," etc., 1879-'80; "Sketches by Samuel Prout" (THE STUDIO Winter Number, 1914-'15).]

Up to 1819 Prout's work was confined to the making of English topographical drawings and marine subjects. They show Girtin's influence mainly, and they are stolid, heavy-handed, and rather dull.

In 1819 Prout went to France, and in 1821 to Belgium and the Rhine provinces. The drawings made from his sketches appeared in the exhibitions of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours and attracted a great deal of interest and admiration, partly on account of their novel subject-matter—for the public was beginning to weary of the numberless views of Tintern Abbey, Harlech, Conway and Carnarvon Castles, and other English subjects, with which it had been surfeited during the preceding twenty years—and partly on account of Prout's boldness of manner and marked feeling for the picturesque. Having struck this successful vein of subject-matter Prout continued to work it till the end of his life, producing a great quantity of water-colours of Continental buildings, all executed on the same general principles, and several series of admirable lithographs from his sketches and drawings.

Ruskin liked Prout and admired his work inordinately. In "Modern Painters" he calls him "a very great man"—which is absurd—and says that his rendering of the character of old buildings is "as perfect and as heartfelt as I can conceive possible." Some people may prefer the buildings in Turner's early drawings, in Cotman's, Girtin's, and Bonington's works. But Prout's work is uniformly successful within its own limitations; it is bold, workmanlike, and picturesque, and its subject-matter is full of inexhaustible interest and delight.

## PETER DE WINT

[Born at Stone, Staffordshire, Jan. 21, 1784; apprenticed to John Raphael Smith, 1802; student R.A. Schools, 1809; Associate, Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1810, member, 1811, and 1825; died at 40 Upper Gower Street, June 30, 1849.]

EXHIBITED: Royal Academy, 1807, '11, '13-'15, '19, '20, '28; British Institution, 1808, '13-'17, '21, '24; Associated Artists, 1808, '09; Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1810-'15, '25-'49.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: V. and A. Museum (Oil and Water-Colours); British Museum; National Galleries of Scotland and Ireland; Manchester Whitworth Institute; Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Bury, Norwich, Nottingham Art Galleries, etc.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: Sir Walter Armstrong's "Peter De Wint," 1888; Roget's "History," etc.; "D. N. B."

REPRODUCTIONS: Armstrong's "De Wint"; "Masters of English Landscape Painting" (THE STUDIO Special Summer Number, 1903).]

De Wint's work may be described as a cross between that of Girtin and Cotman. Girtin was his first source of inspiration. From him he learned the value of breadth of effect and simplicity of design. From Cotman he learned to distil his colour harmonies from Nature. As a draughtsman he was less of a mannerist than Girtin, and he had not Cotman's marvellous feeling for the beauties of abstract design.

De Wint had Dutch blood in his veins, and he had a good deal of the Dutchman's solidity of character and stolid realism. His drawings always look like bits of real life. They are nearer to the common experience of Nature than either Turner's, Cozens', Girtin's, or Cotman's works. But his homely realism is always restrained by his respect for the medium he worked in and by his innate sense of style.

His work is well represented in the Victoria and Albert Museum by drawings like *Bray on the Thames, from the Towing Path, Hayfield, Yorkshire*, and *Westmoreland Hills, bordering the Ken*, all lent to that Museum from the National Gallery; and of his famous works in private collections we may mention *Cookham-on-Thames*, recently in the Beecham Collection, *The Thames from Greenwich Hill*, once in the collection of James Orrock, and *Near Lowther Castle*.

For all his "objectivity," his steadiness of poise, his calm strength of character, De Wint's work is intensely personal and original. The number of admirers of his manly and felicitous work has steadily increased since his death, and can only go on increasing as the public gets more opportunities of seeing his noble works with their superb mosaic of rich, deep, and harmonious colour.

## RICHARD PARKES BONINGTON

[Born at Arnold, near Nottingham, October 25, 1802; received some instruction from Francia at Calais, 1817; studied at the Louvre and Institute, and under Baron Gros, at Paris; first exhibited at the Salon,

1822 ; made lithographs for Baron Taylor's "Voyages Pittoresques dans l'ancienne France," "Vues Pittoresques de l'Ecosse" (1826) and other works ; visited England with Delacroix, 1825 ; died during a visit to England, 1828.

EXHIBITED : Salon (Paris), 1822 (Water-Colours), '24 (Water-Colours), '27 (Oils and Water-Colours) ; Royal Academy, 1827, '28 ; British Institution, 1826-'29.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES : Louvre ; National Gallery ; National Portrait Gallery (a small drawing of himself) ; V. and A. Museum (Oil and Water-Colours) ; British Museum ; Wallace Collection ; Manchester Whitworth Institute ; Nottingham, Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow Art Galleries ; National Gallery of Ireland.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES : "Annual Register" and "Gentleman's Magazine," 1828 ; Cunningham's "Lives," etc. ; Redgrave's "Dictionary" ; THE STUDIO, Nov. 1904 ; Catalogue of Bonington's Lithographs, by Aglaüs Bonvenne (Paris, 1873 ; "Influence de Bonington et de l'Ecole Anglaise sur la Peinture de Paysage en France," by A. Dubuisson (Walpole Society's Vol. II.).

REPRODUCTIONS : "Series of Subjects from Bonington's Works," lithographed by J. D. Harding (twenty-one plates), 1828 ; Monkhouse's and Hughes's works cited above.]

Bonington was the most brilliant of the later school of topographical artists—those who used the full resources of water-colour for the production of pictorial effects. The drawings he produced during his short life—for he died at twenty-six, may be divided into purely topographical subjects, like the *Street in Verona* (V. and A. Museum) ; river and coast scenes, like the *Rouen* (Wallace Collection) ; and figure subjects, in which historical costume played the chief part, like the *Meditation* and several other drawings in the Wallace Collection.

His drawings are amazingly dexterous, firm and large in handling, finely composed, and wonderfully rich in tone and colour. His influence on English artists was considerable, particularly on W. J. Müller, T. Shotter Boys, and William Callow.

As he worked mostly in Paris his best paintings and drawings are generally to be found in the French private collections. That is probably why he is better known and more warmly appreciated in France than in England. An authoritative book on Bonington's life and work is much needed. Just before the war broke out it was rumoured that a work of this kind, the joint production of Monsieur A. Dubuisson and Mr. C. E. Hughes, was about to be published by Mr. John Lane. Such a work will be doubly welcome, for it will help us to realize the amazing quantity of work Bonington managed to produce in his short life, and its wonderful quality ; and it should benefit Bonington's reputation by drawing attention to the large number of drawings and paintings to which, in our public and private collections, his name is wrongly and ignorantly given.

## MYLES BIRKET FOSTER

[Born at North Shields, February 4, 1825, of an old Quaker Family ; educated at the Quaker Academy at Hitchin, Herts, where he had lessons from Charles Parry, the drawing master ; apprenticed to

Ebenezzer Landells, the wood-engraver, 1841-1846; engaged chiefly on book-illustration till 1858, after that time devoted mostly to painting; Associate "Old" Water-Colour Society, 1860, member, 1862; painted in oils 1869-1877, after which he abandoned it in favour of water-colours; died at Weybridge, March 27, 1899.

EXHIBITED: Royal Academy, 1859, '69-'77, '81; Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1860-'99; Society of British Artists, 1876; Royal Scottish Academy, 1871, '75.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: National Gallery; V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours); Birmingham, Manchester, and Bury Art Galleries.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: "Art Annual," 1890; "Athenæum," April 1, 1899; "D. N. B." (Supplement); "Birket Foster," by H. M. Cundall, 1906.

REPRODUCTIONS: "Art Annual," 1890; Cundall's "Birket Foster."]

In his choice of subjects Birket Foster confined himself generally to roadside and woodland scenes, and in these he sought prettiness rather than the deeper and more profoundly poetical emotions. His work is neat and extraordinarily accomplished, but his style being always the same made its many merits seem mechanical and unfeeling. Unlike the older men he avoided the use of broad washes of transparent colour, used body-colour freely, and finished his work with elaborate stipplings.

His standard of excessive finish, his general methods of work and choice of subject-matter, were violently opposed to those of the younger men who came after him. For this reason, and also because of the great popularity he enjoyed, Birket Foster's work has excited the animosity of "superior persons" and æsthetes. But their cheap and easy sneers merely mark the inevitable reaction which follows a period of indiscriminating praise. Doubtless Birket Foster was not the great artist his contemporaries thought him to be. But his work must figure in any well-balanced history of British landscape painting, if only because it expresses so fully and abundantly, and with so much technical success, the artistic ideals of a large part of the nineteenth century. But it also deserves consideration for other reasons. Birket Foster's grace and prettiness were the results of his sincere and unaffected love of the orderliness and real beauty of the life of the English countryside. He had a genuine affection for the themes he painted, and he painted them in the way he thought best. Fashions in technical matters change, slowly perhaps but inevitably, and I shall be very much surprised if the future will not be readier than we are to-day to give Birket Foster's work its due meed of affectionate admiration.

## ALFRED WILLIAM HUNT

[Born in Bold Street, Liverpool, Nov. 15, 1830; educated at Liverpool Collegiate School and at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, which he entered with a scholarship, 1848; a fellow of Corpus, 1853-1861; Associate of Liverpool Academy, 1854, member, 1856; Associate Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1862, member, 1864; died May 3, 1896.

EXHIBITED: Royal Academy, 1854, '56, '57, '59-'62, '70-'75, '77, '79-'83, '85-'88; Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1860-'93; Society of British Artists, 1846, '59, '60, '70, '73, '74; Grosvenor Gallery, 1882, '87; New Gallery, 1888, '90; Portland Gallery, 1854-'56, '60; Dudley Gallery (Oil), 1872.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: National Gallery; V. and A. Museum (Water-Colours); Liverpool, Glasgow, and Birmingham Art Galleries.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: "Athenæum," May 9, 1896; Catalogue B.F.A. Club's Exhibition, 1897; "D. N. B." (Supplement); "One Way of Art," by Violet Hunt, "St. George's Review," June 1908.

REPRODUCTIONS: One in "The Old Water-Colour Society" (THE STUDIO Spring Number, 1905).]

Of all the artists influenced by Ruskin's propaganda in favour of Naturalism Alfred William Hunt was probably the most sensitive and the most poetical. He was as ardent a student of "natural facts" as John Brett, Holman Hunt, or any other of Ruskin's protégés, but his work was never, like so much of theirs, merely literal and tedious. His works prove to demonstration how little artistic theories count in determining the value of a work of art. We know Ruskin's theories of realism were all wrong, but the sensitiveness of Alfred Hunt's nerves, the intensity and rightness of his emotions, redeemed his work and gave it an inevitable stamp of greatness.

In the absorbingly interesting account of her father's methods of work contributed by Miss Violet Hunt to "St. George's Review" (1908) the demands made by his art on the nerves and character of the artist are vividly described. His daughter tells us that she has seen "delicately stained pieces of Whatman's Imperial subjected to the most murderous 'processes,' and yet come out alive in the end." Hunt "scrupled not to 'work on the feelings of the paper,' as his friend George Boughton used to tell him, He severely sponged it into submission; he savagely scraped it into rawness and a fresh state of smarting receptivity. Yet some of the drawings that have suffered *peine forte et dure* are among the most cherished assets of certain private collectors, such as Mr. Newall and the late Mr. Humphrey Roberts."

The "subtle finish and watchfulness of nature" which Ruskin praised in Hunt's work was only the raw material of his art. It was the fervour and energy with which he subdued his facts to a genuinely poetic unity of feeling and expression that make Hunt's drawings so significant and beautiful. To-day Hunt seems to be forgotten by all but a small number of admirers, but works like his *Durham Misty with Colliery Smoke*, *Bamborough from the Sands*, *Cloud March at Twilight*, and many others as poignant and as beautiful, are sufficient guarantees that he will not always be neglected.

## JAMES ABBOTT McNEILL WHISTLER

[Born at Lowell, Massachusetts, July 10, 1834; lived in Russia, 1843-'49; studied at the Military Academy, West Point, 1851-1854; engaged



on United States coast and geodetic survey for about a year; went to Paris, 1855, and studied in Gleyre's studio; published set of thirteen etchings—"The French Set"—1858; settled in London, 1860; published "The Thames" set of etchings, 1871; libel action against Ruskin, 1878; bankrupt, 1879; "Ten-o'clock" lecture, 1884; portrait of Carlyle bought for Glasgow, 1891; "Grand Prix" for painting, and another for engraving, at Paris exhibition, 1900; died at 74 Cheyne Walk, July 17, 1903.

EXHIBITED: Royal Academy, 1859-'65, '67, '70, '72, '79; Society of British Artists, 1884-'87; Grosvenor Gallery, 1877-'79, '81-'84; Dudley Gallery (Oil), 1871-'73, '75; Dudley Gallery (Black and White), 1872, '79, '80; Society of Portrait Painters, 1891-'93; Royal Scottish Academy, 1899, 1901-'04.

WORKS IN PUBLIC GALLERIES: National Gallery; Glasgow Art Gallery.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES: "The Art of Whistler," by T. R. Way and G. R. Dennis, 1903; "Life of Whistler," by E. R. and J. Pennell, 2 vols., 1908; "Memoirs of Whistler," by T. R. Way, 1912; Wedmore's "Whistler's Etchings"; "D. N. B." (Supplement).

REPRODUCTIONS: The "Whistler Portfolio" (THE STUDIO Special Publication, 1904); the monthly issues of THE STUDIO; in Way's and Pennell's works cited above, etc.]

In Turner's and Alfred Hunt's works the multitudinous objects of Nature are subdued to poetical and decorative purposes chiefly by the influence of the atmosphere. But though subdued in the final result the facts were always vividly present to the minds of these artists. With Whistler and all those who like him were influenced by the theories of Impressionism, such facts were less considered. They began with the study of values and tones, and relied almost entirely on the justness with which these were rendered, being content with a merely slight and grudging suggestion of the objects which were veiled in their envelopment of atmosphere. The difference, I admit, is only one of degree. But it accounts, I think, for the difference between a drawing like Whistler's water-colour of *London Bridge* (reproduced in Mr. Way's "The Art of James McNeill Whistler," p. 96) and, say, Alfred Hunt's *Coast Scene near Whitby* (1878).

The advantage of Whistler's method of approach is that it throws greater emphasis on the decorative quality of the picture, the tones being capable of treatment as a unity of colour harmonies—an advantage which Whistler clearly realized and diligently exploited.

It was not till about 1880 that Whistler took up water-colour painting. The *London Bridge* referred to above was done soon after his return from Venice. He then used this medium for some fine drawings made in the Channel Islands, and from time to time in various places in England and abroad, chiefly at St. Ives and Southend. It is almost unnecessary to say that he used water-colour with the same unerring mastery he displayed in his etchings and pastels. But the curious will notice the use he made in nearly all his water-colours of the grey underpainting which played such an important part in the drawings of the early topographers. He did not, however, use this grey underpainting, as they

did, merely to establish the broad division of light and shade. In his bold and skilful hands it did more than this; it formed the unifying element—the ground tone or harmony—which knit together the lovely tones and colours which made his works so charming and delightful to the eye. The influence of Whistler's methods and ideals is clearly marked in the works of men like J. Buxton Knight and C. E. Holloway, two artists who produced a greater volume of fine work in water-colour than Whistler. We might have chosen them on this account to take his place in our small gallery of representative water-colour painters, but the quality of Whistler's work seemed to us of more consequence than their quantity. And though both these men—especially Buxton Knight—urgently demand fuller recognition than they have yet received, we are bound to admit that Whistler was a greater genius than either; and that seems to settle the matter.

#### (5) THE WORK OF TO-DAY

WE have now traced the development in the past of subject-matter and technique in British landscape painting in water-colour, and we have surveyed as well as our poor memories would enable us to do so—for the Museums have long been closed and most private collections are inaccessible, and it is therefore impossible either to verify or renew our earlier impressions—the differing aims and diverse achievements of a few of those who have made our national art so glorious and so memorable. We have done this because the careful and attentive study of the history of an art provides the best, and, indeed, the only, means by which we can educate ourselves to value and appreciate it. Historical studies enable us to enlarge our sympathies and discipline our tastes, so that the man who knows best what has been done in the past will be the first to appreciate the good work which is being done by living artists. He will also be the most indulgent critic of a young artist's shortcomings, and the readiest to help and encourage him in his difficult struggle toward self-expression and mastery over his intractable material.

It is not, however, our business on the present occasion to praise the works with which this volume is enriched. In the first place, to do so is quite unnecessary, because the works are here to speak for themselves, or rather such excellent colour-reproductions of them that almost all their charm and beauty have been preserved; and, in the second place, to do so would be impertinent, because the fact that these drawings have been selected by the Editor of *THE STUDIO* for publication in this way is a sufficient guarantee of their merit and importance. I shall, therefore, confine my remarks rather to the general character of their subject-matter and treatment than to their individual excellences. In this way the following observations may be taken as an attempt to continue to the present day the survey of the past which occupied us in a previous chapter.

In tracing the development of subject-matter in the works of the artists of the nineteenth century we have seen that they generally gave prominence to the place represented, with all its historical and literary associations. Whistler was the chief exception to this tendency, as in his work the decorative and emotional elements of the picture itself were most prominent. Whistler's example has been followed by many of the living artists. Men like Clausen and Mark Fisher are shy of any suggestion of what has been called "literary subject" or "guide-book" interest. But though the works of such artists, from their absence of topographical interest, seem to claim classification as poetical landscapes, yet, if we compare them with the earlier poetical landscapes of men like Lambert, Zuccarelli, George Smith of Chichester, and the elder Barret, we find they have undergone a very thorough change of character. The older work owed more to the study and imitation of the Old Masters than to the study and representation of Nature. In the place of formulas and motives borrowed from Claude and Poussin the modern men give us their own interpretations of what they have seen and felt in the presence of Nature. So that if we take a drawing like Mark Fisher's *Landscape*, reproduced in the present volume (Plate VI), we find that it is, or at any rate that it looks as though it is, the representation of an actual place, though the place is unnamed and therefore devoid of any historical or literary interest to the spectator. Such a drawing may therefore very well be classed as topographical, though the topographical matter is used in the service of other than strictly topographical purposes.

However, in the works of other distinguished living artists, like Matthew Hale, Albert Goodwin—whose *Lincoln* is here reproduced (Plate VIII), Hughes-Stanton, Lamorna Birch, Wilson Steer, Rich, Gere, etc., we often find a similar use of topographical matter for the purposes of poetical expression, but at the same time they show a marked preference for the choice of subject-matter enriched by historical and literary associations.

The majority of drawings here reproduced are the outcome of their painters' loving and tireless effort to render the appearances of Nature in their exact tones and colours. There is little of conscious artifice or pre-occupation with abstract design of form or colour in drawings like C. M. Gere's vivid presentment of light—*The Round House* (Plate VII), Eyre Walker's *Pool in the Woods* (Plate XIII), R. W. Allan's *Maple in Autumn* (Plate XV), George Houston's *Iona* (Plate XX), or in Mark Fisher's *Landscape*. But though their aims, broadly speaking, are the same, viz. the truthful rendering of particular effects of light and particular scenes, yet each work is different from each, and each is personal and individual, because the artist has painted only what he liked and knew best.

In other cases, generally in the choice of subject-matter, one is often reminded of the works of the older men, only to realize as the result of

the comparisons thus provoked the important differences which distinguish the new treatment and justify the repetition of the same motives. Sir Ernest Waterlow's *In Crowhurst Park* (Plate XIV), for instance, calls up memories of David Cox, of E. M. Wimperis, Tom Collier and many others who have delighted in such wide surveys of rolling down and moving cloud. But Sir Ernest's work holds its own against all our historical reminiscences ; it is so vivid, so evidently the outcome of the artist's experiences, so freely and confidently set up. Robert Little's *Tidal Basin, Montrose* (Plate X), Lamorna Birch's *Environ of Camborne* (Plate V), and Murray Smith's *On the Way to the South Downs* (Plate XXII), justify themselves in the same way. How easily, too, can we imagine Girtin or Cozens painting the scene which Russell Flint has portrayed so vividly in his *April Evening, Rydal Water* (Plate XIX). Yet how differently they would have painted it !

In all this one sees the Naturalistic movement begun in the nineteenth century still at work, with its inevitable tendency towards Pantheism—its exaltation of Nature at the expense of man and the individual. Moralists have dwelt upon its dangers in the deadening effect it is supposed to produce upon the sense of individual responsibility and freedom of will. But with results like these before our eyes we are more inclined to dwell upon its advantages, its enlargement of our sympathies and knowledge.

But the tendency is not altogether in the direction of Pantheism. There is a group of artists, among whom I will only mention D. Y. Cameron, A. W. Rich, Albert Goodwin, and C. J. Holmes, which manfully upholds the supremacy of the artist over Nature. The influence of the art of the past has counted for more in works like Cameron's *Autumn in Strath Tay* (Plate XVIII), Rich's *Swaledale* (Plate XI), Goodwin's *Lincoln*, and Holmes's *Near Aisgill* (Plate IX), than Nature herself. In these drawings the free-will of the individual triumphantly asserts itself. They are what they are because their makers loved art and particular forms of art first of all, and wanted to imitate them. Their inspiration came from within (from human nature) and not from without (from physical nature). But this is not to say that they are mere copies of other men's works, for obviously they are nothing of the kind. They are at least as original and individual as any of the other drawings of which we have spoken. And these artists, too, study Nature just as keenly and as indefatigably as the realists, only their methods of study are different. With works like those illustrated in this volume—so different in aim and method, yet each so virile, sincere and personal—it is evident that water-colour painting is still a distinctly living art in this country. The British water-colour painters of to-day are "keeping their end up" as well as our soldiers, sailors and workers in other spheres, and, like them, they have earned the right to face the future with hearts full of confidence and hope.

PLATE V.



*(In the possession of the Fine Art Society.)*

"ENVIRONS OF CAMBORNE." BY S. J. LAMORNA BIRCH, R.W.S.





PLATE VI.



*(In the possession of Messrs. Ernest Brown  
& Phillips, the Leicester Galleries.)*

LANDSCAPE. BY MARK FISHER, A.R.A.





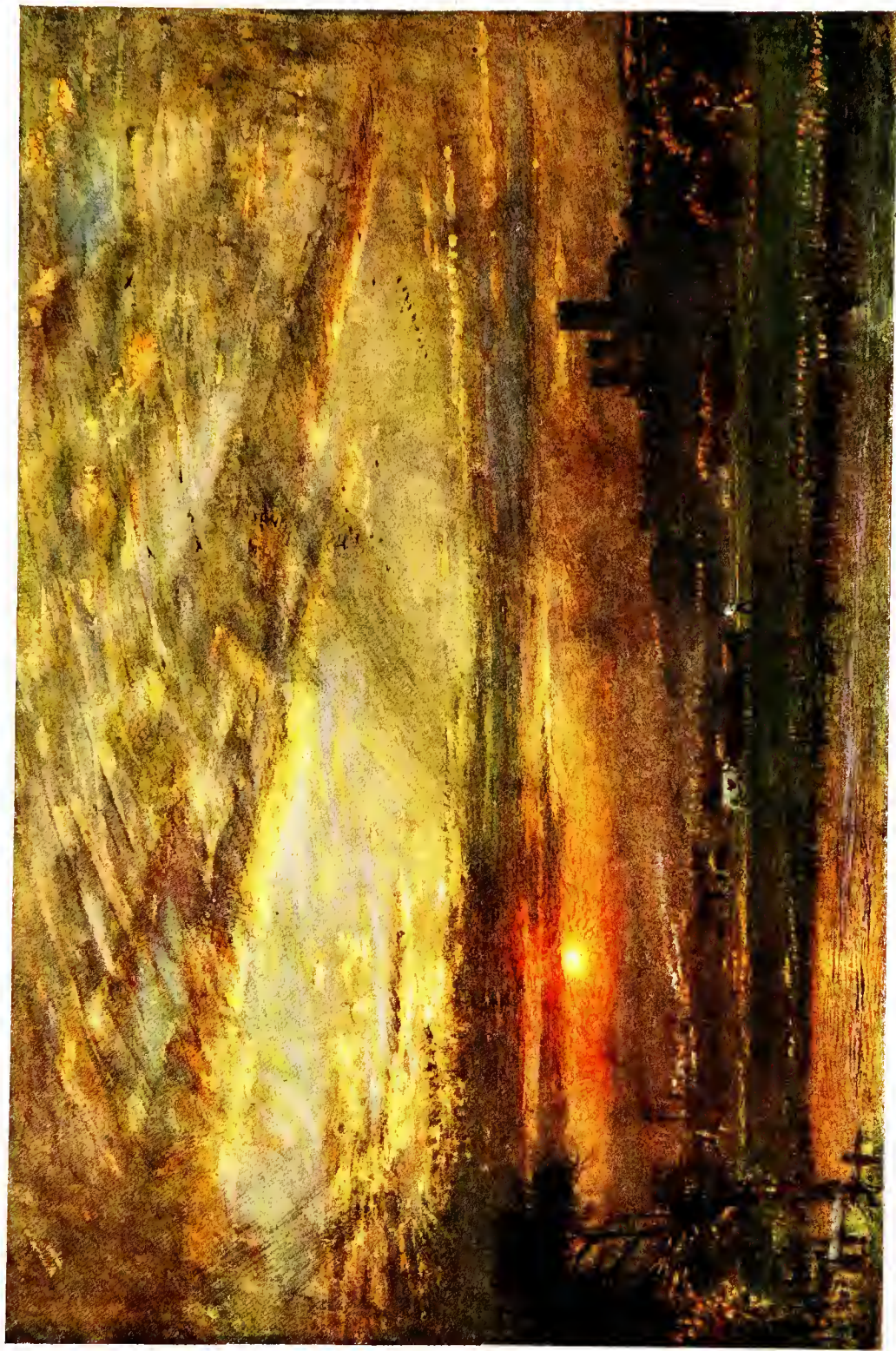


"THE ROUND HOUSE." BY CHARLES M. GERE.





PLATE VIII.



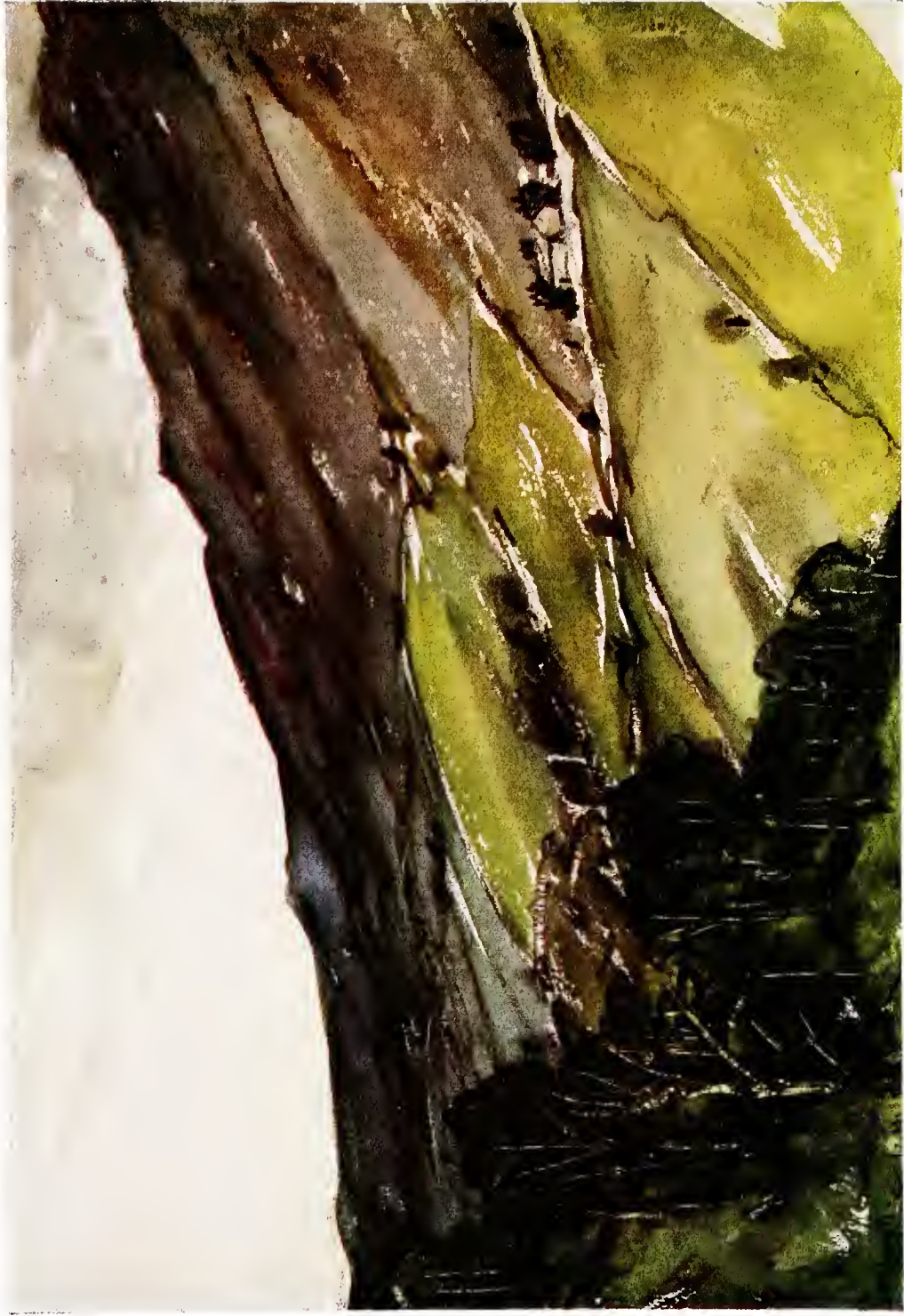
(In the possession of E. H. Cress, Esq.)

"LINCOLN." BY ALBERT GOODWIN, R.W.S.





PLATE IX.



(In the possession of Dr. M. Carnegie, Esq.)

"NEAR AISGILL," BY C. J. HOLMES



PLATE X.







PLATE XI



"SWALEDALE," BY ALFRED W. RICH







*(In the possession of  
W. Lawrence Smith, Esq.)*

"CAUGHT IN THE FROZEN PALMS OF SPRING"  
BY LIONEL SMYTHE, R.A., R.W.S.





PLATE XIII.



"A POOL IN THE WOODS. BY W. EYRE WALKER, R.W.S."





PLATE XIV.



"IN CROWHURST PARK, SUSSEX." BY SIR E. A. WATERLOW, R.A.; R.W.S., H.R.S.W.





# THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN WATER-COLOURS: SCOTTISH PAINTERS. BY E. A. TAYLOR

**T**O lift the veil enshrouding the past and, though but dimly, recall its artists' lives and works may appeal to a few only. The secrets of the great are already known; their deeds, as modern times desire, will be more rapidly found tabulated in any biographical dictionary; those whom chance and fate have less favoured will serve no other purpose than that of a poor remembrance. Nevertheless to separate those who followed the ways of art in other than water-colour landscape painting, I must recall some at least whose influence of mind and work aided to attain in Scotland the important position it commands to-day. Amongst the first connected with landscape painting the names of John and Robert Norie cannot fairly be omitted. Carrying on a business in Edinburgh at the beginning of the eighteenth century as house painters and decorators, it was in their decorative schemes that landscape played the most significant part, a form of decoration of considerable fashion in the Scottish capital at that time, and applied in various ways to doors, panels, mantelpieces, etc., of private houses; and apart from their business, both father and sons painted some landscapes of no mean order. It was in their workshops, too, that some afterwards notable artists, in their early life, served as apprentices, famous amongst them being Alexander Runciman (1736-1785), John Wilson (1774-1855), and James Howe (1780-1836).

Landscape painting, however, apart from such as was utilized in decorative schemes, had little or no public appreciators. Portraits and deeds of tragedy and valour seemed to occupy the artists' minds; yet, like the curlew's haunting note on loch and mountain side, there was an influence astir towards more peaceful scenes, a call that knew no limited geography, no definite law. In Ayrshire, Robert Burns (1759-1796) was weaving his nature songs; while Alexander Nasmyth (1758-1840), in Midlothian, was preparing his palette to capture similar themes in paint. But perhaps the greatest impetus given to a wider public appreciation of the scenery of his own country was the publication in 1810 of Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake," followed in 1814 by his more distinguished "Waverley Novels." Yet previous to that universal awakening, in 1793 Alexander Nasmyth resigned his portrait and figure work for that of landscape, and it is from that period that this branch of painting in oils most vigorously commenced; while apart from the use of water-colour by topographical artists, perhaps the first few landscapes of importance were of a slightly earlier date, by the renowned architect Robert Adam (1728-1792). Not,

however, until the time of Hugh William Williams (1773-1829) did the art become more pictorially practised. As Nasmyth has been credited with being the father of Scottish landscape painting in oils, Hugh William Williams might be more universally noted as, if not the father, at least one of the principal pioneers of landscape painting in water-colours. Taking a short extract from a criticism of an exhibition of his work in that medium opened in Edinburgh in 1822, the writer states: "There is room for more unqualified praise than in the works of any single artist in landscape painting to which this country has yet given birth." Williams, however, was of Welsh parentage and born on board his father's ship when at sea, his early upbringing being entrusted to an Italian grandfather in Edinburgh, where his name as an exhibitor and water-colour painter became prominent in 1810. His successes at that time enabled him to undertake a long sojourn in Italy and Greece, of which he published an account in 1820 illustrated with engravings and some of his own drawings, following it up with his exhibition in 1822 almost entirely composed of work done during his continental travels. Artistically his paintings are distinctly personal, and technically they are treated with broad simple washes over delicately outlined compositions. Another artist of the period remembered for his water-colour work was Andrew Wilson, born in Edinburgh (1780-1848), who, after a varied art life in Italy and England, occupied the post of master in the Trustees Academy of his native city in 1818. It was during this year that the remarkable David Roberts, who is said to have had a week's tuition under Wilson, started to exhibit his famed architectural subjects; while a few years later Andrew Donaldson, whose work in the style of Prout, and little known beyond Glasgow, contributed in no slight degree to the advancement of water-colour painting in that city.

It was not, however, until 1832 that the water-colour landscapes of William Leighton Leitch began to make their public appearance, and biographical records place this artist and Williams as the two most prominent water-colour painters in Scotland in those days. From a Glasgow weaver to house-painter and scene-painter, ultimately instructing the Queen and other members of the Royal Household, Leitch's life was certainly inspiring to young enthusiasts, and his work being of rather the "pretty" order was undoubtedly popular. But England claimed the later and more important days of his life.

To revive more distinctly local Scottish memories one must turn to the name of Thomas Fairbairn (1821-1885). Originally a shop-lad with a firm of dyers in Glasgow, Fairbairn had no rose-paved road to travel to attain his desires, and it is by his sketches of old houses and localities around Glasgow that he at first became known, and latterly by his literal paintings of forest scenery. Attracted by the wealth of subject at Cadzow, in Hamilton, it was there that in 1852 he met Sam Bough,

who greatly influenced his further artistic outlook, as the English borderer did that of many other painters, and who twenty-three years later was lauded as being one of the most important figures in Scottish art. Another prominent artist at the time was J. Crawford Wintour (1825-1882) who, though chiefly concerned with oil painting, showed his rarest artistic achievements in water-colour landscapes. To him and Bough the credit is due for creating a greater interest in that medium and branch of art than it had hitherto enjoyed. Nevertheless the various exhibitions gave but scanty appreciation to the water-colour painters. In their organizers' minds the medium employed seemed to be rated higher than a work of art, despite water-colour being the one almost entirely employed by the supreme artists of China and Japan. Works in it were exhibitionally a little less than ignored, with the result that in Glasgow on December 21, 1877, ten enthusiasts held the first preliminary meeting of the now important Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Water-Colours. The only member of that faithful gathering now living is the Society's present Vice-President, A. K. Brown, R.S.A. It was not, however, until two months later that the Society was definitely formed, due to the proposition of Sir Francis Powell and seconded by William McTaggart, Powell being elected its first president and the virile Sam Bough vice-president on March 4, 1878. In November of the same year the new Society held its first exhibition in which 172 pictures were shown; and in February 1888, as the only representative art body of its kind in Scotland, it was empowered to use the prefix "Royal." Its present membership numbers seventy-nine, of which eight are honorary, under the presidency of E. A. Walton, R.S.A. That the Society has been the means of promoting a wider public interest in water-colour painting in Scotland has been clearly evinced, and of recent years its exhibitions (now and again not entirely confined to the work of its members) have unquestionably stimulated a general interest in the art. Yet the day seems still far off when a more united appreciation will be based on a picture as a work of art, regardless of the value placed upon the medium in which it is produced.

In comparison with the old water-colourists' slightly tinted drawings, the chief elements most markedly notable in the modern development are the more extensively varied methods employed, aided considerably by the scientifically discovered greater range and assured permanency of pigments and materials. Technically, I think, the art of painting is closely allied to the art of acting; the actor utilizes voice and make-up according to the emotions and character he wishes to express, in the same way that the painter's subject and thought to be fully indicated call for a process and technique affinitive with them. Within recent years it became the fashion amongst water-colour artists to strain the medium beyond its limited powers, the result being heavily framed works com-

peting in a feeble way with oils, and subjects that would certainly have been better rendered artistically had this medium been employed.

With the exception of the work of De Wint and Cox, the greatest influence recognizable in the work of many of the Scottish water-colourists is of Dutch origin and easily traced to such masters as Anton Mauve, Josef Israëls, Bosboom and the Maris brothers ; so much so in fact that with certain artists it has been difficult to discern the difference between many of their own paintings and those of the men by whom they were so obviously inspired. The method employed was as follows : after the drawing had been roughly suggested, the paper was submitted to a tubbing and scrubbing, so that the colour ate its way in until finally more direct and stronger touches were applied, desired lighter portions being wiped out while wet, or slicked up with a little body-colour. The method, though losing much that is inherently beautiful in water-colour, is nevertheless one which most aptly suggests certain phases of landscape dealing with poetic sentiment and mystery.

The one perfect artist in Scotland who most originally adopted the process was Arthur Melville (1855-1904). What good there was in it he certainly extracted ; Melville, too, seldom resorted to the aid of body-colour. I have known him, if unsatisfied with any portion of his painting, to deliberately cut it out and dexterously insert a fresh piece of paper, and much trouble and experience went to bring about the apparent ease with which his work appears to have been done.

Another method extremely popular with some artists, though perhaps practised more on the Continent, was the almost entire use of body-colour on a tinted ground, a method which brings water-colour painting into a closer relation to that of oils. In other than capable hands it has a tendency to lack freshness, giving an opaque and chalky quality to the work. But when used by a few artists in this country who have fully realized its possibilities and limitations, some excellent results have been achieved, pre-eminent amongst them being those by the Newcastle artist, Joseph Crawhall, by whom his many Scottish associates were inspired to a remarkable degree. His paintings, principally of birds and animal life, in the various exhibitions were always outstanding, and to-day there is little if any work of this character being done that can surpass it.

Water-colour, however, used direct without the assistance of scrubbing, scraping and body-colour shows without question the medium at its best. As a process used in what is termed the purist's method, there certainly is no other that can compete with it for affinitive landscapes, and what has been done even experimentally in it, by other than water-colour artists, represents, perhaps, the finest examples of genuine art they have left us. With the exception of the short-lived George Manson (1850-1876), Tom Scott, R.S.A., R. B. Nisbet, R.S.A., and Ewen Geddes, R.S.W., one might safely say that all the Scottish water-

colourists are equally conversant with oils, though in recent years Nisbet has been devoting much of his time to the latter medium.

Perhaps the first artist in Scotland to realize the brilliancy of Nature in water-colour was the late William McTaggart (1835-1910); his landscapes are all veritably untricked effects of the land's and sea's sunlit and wind-swept moods in which his spontaneous and untrammelled method aided to a considerable extent his ability to maintain the high artistic quality of his pictures in oils.

A less vivid outlook attracts the essentially water-colour artist, R. B. Nisbet, his landscapes being almost exclusively low-toned aspects of Nature, and technically similar to the works of the previously mentioned Dutch masters. Universally his work has been vastly appreciated and probably he can claim more official honours than any other Scottish water-colour painter. Not a few of the younger men owe some of the rarer qualities in their work to his sympathetic influence.

In companionship with Nisbet, Tom Scott is probably now, with the exception of Ewen Geddes, the only entirely water-colour painter in Scotland. His *motifs*, however, being chiefly inspired by the glamour surrounding the Borderland, are more of a figured historical nature, but not the least emotional pleasure is derived from their distinctive landscape settings.

Incidentally humble crofts and lowland scenery attract the artist in Ewen Geddes, and as a painter of snow landscapes, I doubt if there is another water-colourist who as sensitively portrays the spirit of the wintry day. But to pick and choose from amongst the many artists whose work entitles them to be more than briefly mentioned, regardless of individual precedence, one may not omit W. Y. MacGregor, A.R.S.A., whose inspiring enthusiasm as father of the famed Glasgow School of Painters is historically honoured, and whose latter-day charcoal and water-colour landscapes are not the least distinctive expressions of genuine art; while amongst younger men, prominently known, are the distinguished exponent C. H. Mackie, R.S.A., R.S.W., whose work and ideas declared in various mediums are extremely invigorating, and J. Hamilton Mackenzie, R.S.W., A.R.E., who, as well as a painter in oils, pastellist and etcher, is an admirable water-colourist. To further enumerate one must include the names of such personal landscape artists as J. Whitelaw Hamilton, A.R.S.A., R.S.W., Archibald Kay, A.R.S.A., R.S.W., T. M. Hay, R.S.W., Alexander MacBride, R.I., R.S.W., Stanley Cursiter, R.S.W., James Herald, and Stewart Orr.

But to deal more minutely with the artists who are here represented, A. K. Brown (Plate XVI) must take precedence for his untiring services rendered to the promotion of the delightful art of water-colour painting in Scotland. Though born in Edinburgh in 1849, it has been in Glasgow that the greater part of his life has been lived, and with the art affairs of that city he has been most directly connected. His early

years were spent there as a calico-print designer, the artistic relationship of which soon led him to the higher ideal of landscape painting, the hills and glens as seen from a moorland road or mountain burn being the themes that most intimately allured him; yet not that aspect of the rugged inhumanity of the hills, but where man has trod, and where the shepherd's whistle may be familiarly heard. It is, too, that sensation of friendliness felt amongst the hills that pervades his works. Treated with a methodical tenderness, they never exhibitionally assert themselves, but must be seen singly to convey their full attractiveness.

In early association next to A. K. Brown would be R. W. Allan, born in Glasgow in 1852 (Plate XV). In his young days, inspired by his father—who was a well-known lithographer in the city, he certainly had not the usual students' struggles to contend with, and was soon one of the few Scottish painters in water-colour who fully realized the beauty of the unsullied quality the medium possessed, by his broad decisive handling in comparison with the prevalent minute finish indulged in. It is now, however, about thirty-five years since he left his native city for London, where he has not only become a distinguished painter in oils, but also a prominent member of the "Old" Water-Colour Society.

Two years later than R. W. Allan, James Paterson (Plate XXI) was born in Glasgow, and is noted there as one of the first artists energetically active, with W. Y. MacGregor, in forming a bolder style of painting than had been previously fashionable, and who, with the grouping of a few other enthusiasts later, became known to the art world as the Glasgow School of Painters. Their revolutionary aims and ideals influenced to a remarkable extent artists and painting in general throughout Scotland. Though equally well known as a painter of the figure and occasional portraits, it is as a landscapist that Paterson's reputation has been most uniquely established, his present Dumfriesshire home providing him extensively with subjects in harmony with his earlier technically broad sympathies.

Not so closely connected with the Glasgow School movement as James Paterson, James Cadenhead, born in Aberdeen in 1858 (Plate XVII), became somewhat imbued with its views. Like the majority of now celebrated water-colourists, oil painting claimed his first attention. Less realistic in outlook than his brother artists, his work assumed a more conceptionally decorative tendency and displayed a flat treatment, technically similar to that which one associates with the landscape artists of Japan. It was by such individual features that attention was drawn to his work, and in 1893 he was elected a member of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Water-Colours, and nine years later an associate of the Royal Scottish Academy, where, in both exhibitions, his work shares with that of other leading artists a distinctive admiration.

Turning to the illustration *Suffolk Pastures*, by E. A. Walton (Plate



XXIV), one finds the work of an artist whose ability as a painter is unanimously respected amongst his fellows. Born in Renfrewshire in 1860, he is also one who has been historically associated with the revolutionary Glasgow School; originally a landscape artist, he is nevertheless one of the leading Scottish portrait painters. But to confine my appreciation to his landscape work, it is with a lingering doubt whether it be his examples in oils or water-colours which are the more enticing if a choice were demanded. It is probably to his work in the gentler medium I would assign the talent of the man and the artist as being most completely revealed, especially favouring those drawings executed on a grey-brown millboard, or some other similarly tinted paper, with which his skilful use of body-colour mingles and expresses his pre-nurtured vision of design and colour harmonies for which he is so greatly esteemed.

Five years later than E. A. Walton, D. Y. Cameron was born in Glasgow (Plate XVIII). With the exception of Muirhead Bone, there is no other Scottish artist whose pre-eminence as an etcher is as universally admitted. Within recent years his reputation as a painter has been rapidly becoming as widely acknowledged. In his early etchings, oils, and water-colours, though previous masters' influences were easily detected, his gift of selection and fitness placed his results on a higher artistic plane than those by whom he had been evidently inspired, and to-day his work is always amongst the most dignified and refined in any exhibition. Technically he resorts to no fumbled trickery, nor does he strain any of the means he uses beyond their own inherent powers. Before his landscapes one feels the mood of time and place charmingly interpreted, such moods of Nature, when the trivialities of the day have passed, or only those remain which fittingly appeal, with their silent ponderings.

In 1869, at Dalry, Ayrshire, George Houston was born (Plate XX), and it is as a painter of that part of Scotland that his name became most in evidence before the Scottish art world in 1904 by a large-scaled canvas, *An Ayrshire Landscape*, shown at the exhibition of the Glasgow Fine Arts Institute. No little praise was bestowed upon it by artists and public alike, resulting in its being purchased for the City's permanent collection. But memories recall other earlier and smaller works creatively quite as important. To place Houston amongst the Scottish artists is to do so individually, as his work is extremely personal, both technically and compositionally. Late winter and early spring landscapes attract him most, the time, too, when the earth is just dappled with snow, and the atmosphere and undergrowth alive in all their gentle colour-harmony. A keen lover of Nature, little escapes his observation, and it is those qualities of his mind and outlook, so carefully expressed in his oil paintings, that arrest admiring attention in his water-colours of similar themes.

By age, W. Russell Flint and D. Murray Smith belong to the group of younger Scottish painters, and otherwise, similarly, both artists have been resident in England for a considerable time. It is only within recent years that their work has appeared, as it were, anew in the Scottish exhibitions. W. Russell Flint (Plate XIX) was born in Edinburgh in 1880; originally studying in the art school there, he made his home in London in 1900, where, after a short course at Heatherley's Academy, his name and work came rapidly into prominence. In 1913 he was awarded the silver medal for his water-colours in the Salon des Artistes Français. The following year he was elected an associate of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, and a full member in 1917. As an artist both figure and landscape equally reveal his versatile ability. As an illustrator, too, he can claim no less distinctive recognition by his charming imagery expressed in that phase of his talent in the publications of the Riccardi Press. Thoroughly acquainted with the medium of water-colour, he applies it with no special mannerism other than the choice his vision dictates and the subjects of his mind most emotionally demand.

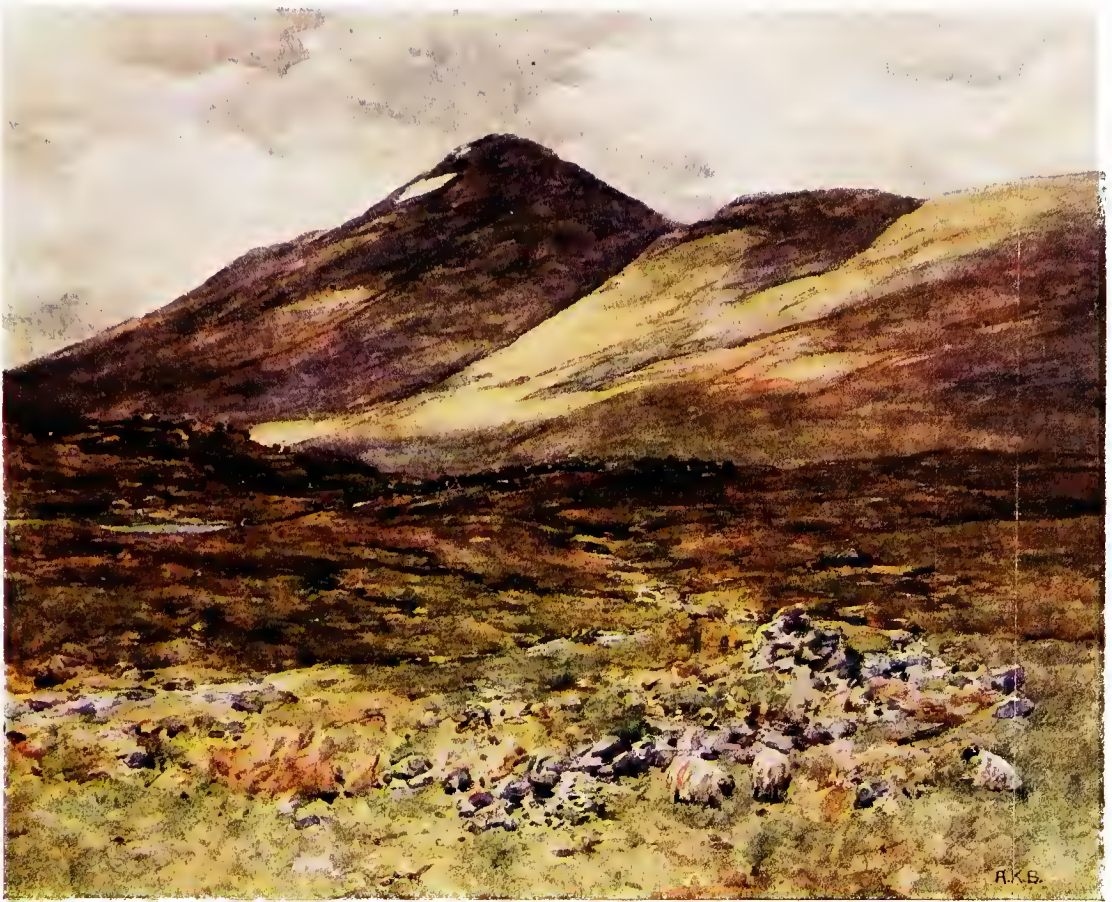
Though less varied paths tempt the outlook of D. Murray Smith (Plate XXII), his spacious conceptions of landscapes are uncommonly interesting. The admirable characteristics of largeness and freedom, which earlier prophesied a coming artist in the Scottish capital where he was born, have altered little. As an etcher of illustrative landscapes in those days he gained no meagre reputation, which he has vastly enhanced in England, where he settled some twenty-four years ago. In all his works there pervades a strong affection for flat expanses of Nature, unhampered in the composition by the human element, save for friendly wayside cottages or distant villages. It is, however, those examples where even such features are the least prominent, like his unpeopled roads, that have a most abiding charm, manifesting at times a vision and technical qualities akin to the rare landscapes by the old Dutch and early English masters, and to the French in their Corot-esque and lyrical love of trees. And it is, perhaps, to the lyrical aspects of Nature that water-colour is most closely allied, and in such of her voiceless poems most expressively lives the spirit of the medium.

PLATE XV.



"THE MAPLE IN AUTUMN." BY ROBERT W. ALLAN, R.W.S., R.S.W.





*(In the possession of J. Whitelaw  
Hamilton, Esq., J.R.S.I.)*

"BEN MORE." BY A. K. BROWN, R.S.A., R.S.W.





PLATE XVII.



"A MOORLAND. BY JAMES CADENHEAD, A.R.S.A., R.S.W.









PLATE XIX.



(In the possession of Messrs. Ernest Bryon  
& Phillips, the Leicester Galleries.)

"APRIL EVENING, RYDAL WATER." BY W. RUSSELL FLINT, R.W.S., R.S.W.





PLATE XX.



"IONA." BY GEORGE HOUSTON, A.R.S.A., R.S.W.





PLATE XXI.



"FRENCHLAND TO QUEENSBERRY, MOFFAT DALE." BY JAMES PATERSON. R.S.A., R.W.S., R.S.W.



PLATE XXII.



"ON THE WAY TO THE SOUTH DOWNS." BY D. MURRAY SMITH, A.R.W.S.



PLATE XXIII.



*(In the possession of Charles Hobbs, Esq.)*

"A BIT OF HIGH CORRIE." BY E. A. TAYLOR.







*(In the possession of John Tattersall, Esq.)*

"SUFFOLK PASTURES." BY E. A. WALTON, R.S.A., P.R.S.W.









